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- 1 Rather than bypass their country’s history of slavery—the very beginning of racial inequality—to instead focus solely on contemporary social disparities, some Afro-Brazilian artists choose to use it as a point of inspiration for their work. In this way, slavery becomes a source of “sustenance” for their creative production and critical reflections. Rosana Paulino and Tiago Sant'Ana are among those artists who have chosen to engage with this historical period. The “sustenance” of slavery holds a dual meaning in these two artists’ work, in particular, in that they each explore a different form of “nourishment” that was related to black labor during that era. Paulino highlights the enslaved wet nurse, whose breast milk went to feed white infants, while Sant'Ana uses sugar as an artistic medium and calls attention to the role of enslaved African labor on Brazil’s northeastern plantations.
- 2 Instead of creating a visceral response to the national history of slavery, both artists focus on aspects that resonate on a personal level. For Paulino, the enslaved wet nurse is a way to connect herself with other black women who have also been marginalized owing to their race and gender. For Sant'Ana, the use of sugar is a means to approximate himself to the history of forced black labor and continued racial inequality in his home region of Bahia. As such, although the artists are interested in exploring the past, they are perhaps more interested in using their work to inspire dialogue about Brazil’s contemporary racial issues.

- 3 Both Paulino and Sant'Ana mine Brazil's visual archive of slavery as part of their artistic process. In incorporating 19th-century prints and photographs of different types of black labor in their 21st-century interpretations, the artists highlight the ubiquitous presence of slavery-era visuals in contemporary society. However, because Brazil, as a nation, has only made concrete efforts to acknowledge and address racial inequality in the past few decades, artists must take a more pointed approach than solely using historical images to effectively critique sustained social disparities. Rather, in utilizing sites with historical ties to slavery in a provocative manner, Paulino and Sant'Ana strategically use space as a key element to underscore persistent racial inequality.

Artistic Reflections on Slavery across the Diaspora

- 4 Artists' choice to address slavery in their work is neither a contemporary trend, nor a tendency restricted to a certain geographical area. A number of English-language publications from recent years specifically on this theme examine how individuals from different countries have artistically engaged with the theme of slavery from the 19th to the 21st century (see Copeland 2013; Bernier & Durkin 2016; Brown 2015; Finley 2018). Artists have taken a multitude of approaches, from utilizing the universally recognized icon of the slave ship, to trying to make visible the more abstract realities confronting "Black lives as lived against the backdrop of the centuries-long institution of transatlantic slavery" (Bernier & Durkin 2016: 3). The almost complete absence of Brazilian artists from these recent international surveys is noteworthy given the country's history of slavery and sizeable African-descendant population.
- 5 Traditionally, artists in Brazil have not been as inclined to create works around the theme of slavery as have individuals from other areas of the African Diaspora. For most artists and audiences, slavery is an uncomfortable subject. Added to this unease is the fact that although over the course of the 20th century both intellectuals and politicians highlighted Brazil's African heritage, only following the 1988 centenary of abolition did the government take concrete actions aimed at acknowledging and combating racial inequality and racial discrimination.¹ Lastly, the lack of a tradition of overtly political art made by Afro-Brazilian artists that directly addressed racism makes work that explores current and historical themes of racially based power imbalances, including slavery, an especially sensitive area of artistic production (Cleveland 2013: 4–6).
- 6 For these and potentially a multitude of other reasons, only a relatively small number of black Brazilians have been drawn to explore slavery as an artistic subject in the past few decades. Among the notable examples are photographer Eustáquio Neves, who has explored the commodification of the black body and corporeal tools of punishment; Ayrson Heráclito, who has addressed plantation labor and the practice of branding slaves' bodies in his multi-media works and performances; and Jaime Lauriano, who has represented historic instruments of bondage and torture in a variety of media.

The Ideological, Physical, and Visual Resonances of Slavery in Brazil

- 7 Slavery in Brazil dates to the 16th century. The Portuguese began a formal colonizing of Brazil with a centralized government in 1549 and concentrated their efforts on cultivating sugarcane along the northeastern coast. They brought African slaves to Brazil to work the plantations after they depleted the Amerindian labor force. Going forward, they continued to import enslaved Africans to work Bahia's numerous sugar plantations, as well as using them for various types of labor in other parts of the country.
- 8 In 1808, the Portuguese Court relocated from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro, which triggered an influx of Europeans to Brazil. The growth of the white population necessitated a greater number of slaves. White masters used slaves primarily as domestic servants in the urban areas and largely as outdoor laborers on the rural plantations. Whites ceased to import additional slaves to Brazil around 1850, but slavery only ended in 1888.
- 9 In the decades following abolition, the dominant white society perpetuated racial inequality while it prided itself on its image as a country unified by racial mixture. Sociologist Gilberto Freyre wrote about the significance of plantation society to Brazilian nation-forming during the colonial period in his seminal 1933 publication *Casa-grande e senzala* (published in English as *The Masters and the Slaves*). In his study, he extolled the positive nature of Brazilian society, characterized by miscegenation, and argued that all Brazilians could participate in a common national culture because of the country's historical mixture. Brazil was a "racial democracy," based on the idea that Amerindian, African, and European peoples and influences all contributed to the formation of the nation. Over the subsequent decades, Freyre's doctrine essentially became the national ideology toward race, reaching its "peak as a dogma under the military governments from 1964–1985" (Telles 2004: 40).
- 10 Although since the release of Freyre's publication numerous individuals and groups have worked to expose Brazil's "myth of racial democracy" and fight the racial inequality that plagues the country, measures with tangible results taken at the national level have largely been limited to the past few decades. In the 1950s, sociologist Florestan Fernandes, and his students at the São Paulo School, challenged Freyre's theory on social equality based on the findings of their own study (Skidmore 1974: 215–8). In 1978, Blacks organized into the Movimento Negro Unificado—a politically charged militant movement dedicated to fighting racial discrimination and social disparity. In 1988, Congress incorporated an updated version of the anti-discriminatory Afonso Arinos Law, first written in 1951, into the new constitution with much stricter penalties for violations (Reid Andrews 1991: 185). In 2002, the Brazilian government installed a system of affirmative action-style programs in public and private universities, civil service exams, and some private business (Da Silva Martins, Medeiros & Nascimento 2004: 804–5). Further, Federal legislation required the teaching of African and Afro-Brazilian history, and the African contributions to the formation of Brazilian society in primary and high-school curriculum.²
- 11 The durability of Freyre's ideological grip on the nation's psyche is paralleled by slave-era architecture that dots the Brazilian landscape. In Freyre's analysis, the Brazilian family was a microcosm of the nation, which was characterized by the dynamic of the

“big house” or mansion (*casa-grande*), in which the slave masters lived, versus the slave quarters (*senzala*). In Brazil, there are a small number of extant slave-era architectural structures related to sugarcane mills and coffee plantations, including their related facilities and living quarters. In Bahia, the buildings most strongly instantiate the regional history of sugar plantations, whereas in the state of São Paulo, more of the structures are associated with the subsequent wave of coffee cultivation.³ The various structures are a visual reminder of the period in national history during which the divisions of race and class structures were born.

- 12 In addition to the architecture, numerous artistic representations also reference Brazil's history of slavery. French artist Jean-Baptiste Debret is responsible for producing some of the most well-known depictions of slavery in Brazil during the fifteen years (1816–1831) he spent there. Following his return to Paris, he transformed some of his original paintings into prints, which were ultimately released in a three-volume album entitled *Voyage pittoresque et historique au Brésil* (*Picturesque and Historic Voyage to Brazil*) published in 1834, 1835, and 1839, respectively (Debret 1834–1839). Editions of the publication, as well as reprints of the original images, are still widely available and circulated in Brazil. Scholars often consult the depictions for ethnographic and social information, and both Brazilian and international academics have used Debret's images as illustrations in their publications on Brazilian history and slavery.
- 13 Decades later, both national and international artists created photographic records of slavery. In the second half of the 19th century, one of the types of images that became increasingly popular for upper-class white families throughout Brazil was a commissioned photograph of the family's black wet nurse with her white charge (see Cleveland 2019: 71–114; Olszewski Filha 1989: 71). Over time, these studio portraits, which were originally intended for an intimate circle of viewers, made their way into institutional collections around the country. Some of these photographs are reproduced in publications on black history in Brazil, including the era of slavery, and, as with the images by Debret, remain in circulation in the 21st century (see Koutsoukos 2010: 136–41; Araújo 2006: 88–91; Ermakoff 2004: 98–103; Kossoy & Carneiro 1994: 186–9).
- 14 The original enslaved inhabitants of the historic architecture have long disappeared, as have the intended audiences of the various artistic renderings. However, the extant vestiges constitute largely unchallenged visual reminders of Brazil's history of slavery. Drawing from Brazil's physical and visual archive of slavery, Paulino and Sant'Ana employ images and spaces related to the era to highlight not only past, but also contemporary, social inequality.

Rosana Paulino

- 15 Exploration of the black female experience from the era of slavery to the present has been at the center of Rosana Paulino's artistic inquiry for the past few decades. After undertaking research on the history of wet nursing in Brazil, the artist made a series of works over several years on this female subject. Her 2005 *Ama de leite II* (*Wet Nurse II*) is one of a pair of small terracotta sculptures of the black wet nurse (fig. 1). Paulino's treatment of the headless female body reflects how, during the era of slavery, Whites viewed the wet nurse as simply an anonymous “type” of laborer, rather than as an

individual. Further, she emphasizes how the women were figuratively and literally “tied” to the white infants through their duties by connecting a multitude of small plastic dolls to the base figure with colored and white ribbons. The flowing, sinuous ribbons simulate a continuous flow of breast milk that emanates from the woman’s body, as the wet nurse was a never-ending source of nourishment.

Fig. 1. Rosana Paulino, *Ama de leite II*, 2005, terracotta, plastic, cloth, 38 × 17.75 × 7.5 cm.

Collection of the artist, São Paulo, Brazil.

- 16 The artist continued her investigation of the wet nurse in the 2007 multi-media work *Ama de leite* (fig. 2). The 2004 publication *O negro na fotografia brasileira do século XIX* (*The Black in Nineteenth-Century Brazilian Photography*) became an important visual resource for this phase of Paulino’s research (Ermakoff 2004). The book includes reproductions of slave-era photographs of black wet nurses and nannies from different institutional collections in Brazil. The publication also features the work of several well-known photographers, including Christiano Junior, who produced a series of carte-de-visite images of slaves acting out different types of labor in his Rio de Janeiro studio, which were largely intended for circulation among foreign audiences.

Fig. 2. Rosana Paulino, *Ama de leite*, 2007, monotypes on cloth, thread, satin ribbon, bottles, digital photographs, 2 × 1.8m.

Collection of the artist, São Paulo, Brazil.

- 17 Paulino's installation is anchored by eight squares of fabric, each featuring a black monotype of some of the famous images of black wet nurses and children's maids from the era of slavery, in addition to a frequently reproduced image of a bare-chested black woman that Christiano Junior took around 1865. In her monotypes, the artist reduces the individuals in the original 19th-century photographs to solid black figures that are surrounded by a stark halo of white. This technique forms part of what historian Juliana Ribeiro da Silva Bevilacqua calls the "void" in Paulino's work, in which "absence is suggested by the lack of representation of the black population" (Ribeiro da Silva Bevilacqua 2018: 153). In spite of the transfer of photograph onto cloth, for those who are familiar with this body of images, including the center one in which a white child "rides" a black female like a horse, the subject matter remains discernible. The artist contrasts the perceptibility of the monotypes with cropped details of the larger photographic images that she pairs with swirls of white ribbon in the corked glass bottles on the floor.
- 18 In this installation, Paulino became more pointed in her social critique. She sews in a deliberate way, with heavy black thread, to make a statement about history, social integration, and racial inequality. According to Paulino, sewing is "an apparent seam, a heavy suture that is made and which is very Brazilian, this suture was never well done in Brazil, these men and women were never incorporated by Brazilian society as they should have been" (Paulino in Santos Monteiro 2018: 41). By piecing together fabric in a coarse way, the artist references the unnatural introduction of black Africans to the country during the era of slavery. Because, more than a century after abolition, Blacks

have failed to gain social equality, one might conclude that their integration into Brazilian society has been anything but seamless.

- 19 Two years later, Paulino extended her manipulation of the black wet nurse's body by leaving only a small part of it visible for the viewer. In the 2009 installation *As amas* (*The Nannies*), numerous pairs of dark ceramic hands protrude from walls (fig. 3). The hands are wrapped in white silk ribbons that link them with objects on the floor. Paulino took the effigies from the bottles of her 2007 installation and placed them freely on the ground. Each of the pieces consists of a black-and-white digital image and scattered white rose petals, which are secured in place by watch glass and sealed with paraffin.

Fig. 3. Rosana Paulino, *As amas*, 2009, satin ribbon, ceramic, paper maché, digital photographs, watch glass, paraffin, white rose petals, dimensions variable.

Collection of the artist, São Paulo, Brazil. Photo credit: Celso Andrade.

- 20 Although Paulino again utilized the black female body of the wet nurse and white ribbon to symbolize the flow of breast milk, in this last work she included a third element: slave-era architecture. In 2007, the artist had an exhibition in Ouro Preto, Minas Gerais, at the Gallery Nello Nuno. The space was the former residence of Brazilian author Bernado Guimarães, whose publications include the classic 1875 novel *A Escrava Isaura* (*The Slave Girl Isaura*). Subsequently, Paulino began to search for other historical places in which to show her work on the black Brazilian experience in order to create a dialogue between the physical space and her art. Her desire was realized when she exhibited *As amas* in the *senzala* of Mata Dentro, a former coffee plantation.

Tiago Sant'Ana

- 21 Tracing the history of racial inequality in his native Recôncavo region of Bahia, with its roots in sugar production and slave labor, has been the inspiration behind Tiago Sant'Ana's major projects in the past few years. His 2018 *Casa de purgar* (*Purification House*) consists of eight components, including recordings of the performances *Refino* (*Refining*) and *Passar em branco* (*To Iron White*), in addition to photographs and installations. In *Refino*, the artist sits on a chair in a doorway of the architectural remains of the Paramirim Sugar Mill, which dates to the mid-18th century (fig. 4). A stream of white sugar rains down, covering his body and accumulating on the floor. The third and fourth components of *Refino* highlight Debret's famous *Voyage pittoresque et historique au Brésil*, which has been opened to pages featuring images of black men pressing sugarcane. In Sant'Ana's interferences, he either pours sugar over Debret's volume to completely submerge it or uses an ornate colonial-era silver dustpan and spoon to remove the sugar and reveal the image.⁴

Fig. 4. Tiago Sant'Ana, *Casa de purgar* exhibition view, Museum of Art of Bahia, March 2018.

Collection of the artist, Bahia, Brazil.

- 22 In *Passar em branco*, the artist, who is again dressed in white, works his way through a stack of white clothing (fig. 5). Positioned in the *casarão* (big house) of the 19th-century Oiteiro Sugar Plantation, he irons the white textiles with an electric iron, and then folds and stacks the items, creating a geometric pillar of the results of his labor. He proceeds to carry the stack of ironed clothing through the space, the pile so tall as to obscure his identity and thereby his ability to see in front of him. These performances have been documented through video and photographs, which are then shown in exhibition form together with the sugar-buried books, stack of ironed clothing, and a

fragmented Portuguese-era blue-and-white tile, the missing sections of which the artist has filled with white sugar. The spaces retain sufficient opulence that it is possible to look beyond the crumbling state of São Francisco do Conde's Chapel of Our Lady of Victory at the Paramarim Sugar Mill and the graffiti covering the architectural ruins of Nova Terra's Oiteiro Plantation to imagine their former states.

Fig. 5. Tiago Sant'Ana, *Casa de purgar* exhibition view, Imperial Palace, Rio de Janeiro, June 2018.

Collection of the artist, Bahia, Brazil. Photo credit: Fernando Souza.

- 23 Although Sant'Ana grew up around markers of the regional history of sugar production in his immediate environment, he nevertheless undertook research as part of the creative process for *Casa de purgar*. In 1975, the Institute of Artistic and Cultural Patrimony of the State of Bahia published an inventory of the region's cultural heritage sites.⁵ The artist used this publication as a resource for its list of the sugar plantations in the Recôncavo area. With the book as his guide, he began to visit the various sites, "taking photographs, analyzing the architecture, but also thinking about the places as catalysts of slavery in Brazil."⁶
- 24 After making his own study of the various sites, Sant'Ana began to formulate a list of the actions he would take within the spaces. These consisted of repeating gestures that referred to slave labor, particularly those related to sugar production. "More than two centuries after African slaves first began to labor in the canefields and mills of the Recôncavo, Bahian planters and cane farmers continued to rely heavily on the transatlantic slave trade to replenish and expand their work forces" (Barickman 1998: 156). Through his movements, Sant'Ana attempts to relate himself to the countless number of Blacks who were part of Bahia's well-studied grand history of sugar production (see Schwartz 1985; Barickman 1998).
- 25 The various steps of sugarcane cultivation and the involvement of slave labor were among the scenes depicted during the 19th century by Debret, among others, in illustrations which continue to be reproduced and circulated in numerous forms today

throughout Brazil. According to Sant'Ana, “people see these images as a natural part of the national history, but they aren't; they don't capture the ugliness, the pain.”⁷ In covering and uncovering the images of slave labor in the third and fourth components of *Refino*, the artist literally and metaphorically mines Brazil's visual archive of slavery, becoming an “archeologist” of sorts. However, because he not only uncovers or unearths the “source,” but also reverses direction and (re)buries the 19th-century images, Sant'Ana makes a sharp criticism about Brazil's inability to confront its past and recognize the effects that social, racial, and economic divisions that were at the root of slavery continue to have on black Brazilians' possibilities for upward mobility in the 21st century.

- 26 The element of slave-era architecture is significant to Sant'Ana's work on multiple levels. Certainly, the artistic actions he undertakes in his *Refino* and *Passar em branco* gain heightened meaning when performed in places with historical ties to slavery rather than in another type of location. However, Sant'Ana's work was (re)located in slave-era architecture when four of the projects of *Casa de purgar* were exhibited in the Museum of Art of Bahia, housed in the former *casarão* of the wealthy slave trader José de Cerqueira Lima.⁸

The Significance of Locating Art in the Spaces of Brazil's Slavery Past

- 27 Because more than a century has passed since abolition, much of contemporary Brazilian society may view the trauma that characterized slavery and its forced black labor as a discrete period of national history. With this mindset, the country's slave-era visuals and architecture are simply innocuous markers of that time. Particularly when former plantations and their relevant structures have been transformed into spaces for other purposes, the original functions of those sites may be overlooked. In her study of physical suffering, Elaine Scarry outlines the gulf of “meaning, intention, connotation, and tone” that separates the same object in its function as either weapon or tool:

The hand that pounds a human face is a weapon and the hand that pounds the dough for bread or the clay for a bowl is a tool. The knife that enters the cow or the horse is a weapon and the knife that cuts through the no longer alive meat at dinner is a tool. The ax that cuts through the back of a wolf is a weapon and the ax that cuts through a tree is a tool. (Scarry 1985: 173)

- 28 Similarly, in its new role as exhibition space, some of Brazil's slave-era architecture functions simply as a tool—as a physical support for the display of art. However, if one considers the architecture in its original context, it was one of the weapons used by Whites against Blacks in the broader institution of slavery.
- 29 Taking into account the full history of the Mata Dentro Plantation in Campinas, São Paulo, where Paulino exhibited in 2009, adds another layer of meaning to her installation *As amas*. In 1879, more than two hundred slaves labored at Mata Dentro as part of its coffee production empire (Fantinatti 2010). In 1987, legislation enabled transformation of the site into an Ecological Park, and in 2007, preparations began to turn the former *senzala* into an exhibition space. In the 2009 installation, the hands protrude from the various existing holes and cracks in the walls. This approach was born, in part, from practical necessity, as Paulino was prohibited from using any material that would permanently affect the space.⁹ Nevertheless, it also presented the

artist with the opportunity to make a poignant and provocative visual statement about the contributions that those marginalized individuals made to the nation through their labor. Their efforts should not simply be allowed to fade into history together with architectural ruins.

- 30 This artistic reflection on gendered black labor, however, also underscores slavery's contemporary ramifications. In the 21st century, many Brazilian women of color who have few opportunities for education and social mobility find themselves unable to break free from the low-status occupation of domestic work. Moreover, this type of employment is often arranged "informally," leaving the women in a precarious situation with few if any legal and financial protections. Paulino asserts, "Still today it is very common in Brazil to say that housemaids are 'family,' when, in reality, this is a way to disguise the exploitation to which these women are subjected."¹⁰ She was motivated to mine the country's visual archive of black female domestic servitude and incorporate various 19th-century images of wet nurses and nannies in her contemporary critique in a provocative way because the "historical images are important to understand the position occupied today by black women in Brazilian society. They tell a story... That's why it's important that we pay attention to them."¹¹
- 31 Paulino's *As amas*, in which she suggests that the hidden or unseen portions of the black women's bodies are inherent parts of the *senzala* and its historical era, takes her artistic meditation on gendered black labor to a new level. The artist strategically used the site to make a visual statement about continued inequality, as the 21st-century black domestic female workers often occupy a space in the background or margins of contemporary society. Paulino acknowledged the significance of showing her work in places with historical ties to slavery: "to feel the 'air' of the space working together with the plastic elements, without a doubt, [made] a great difference to this installation" (Paulino 2011: 64).
- 32 Sant'Ana also recognized the power that architecture with historical links to slavery could hold for his work. While assuming the role of pseudo-archaeologist and researcher, which led him to visit the various historical ruins, he began to understand the spaces not just as physical sites, but as metaphors of the "colonial project—a project of destruction for some lives and of glory and opulence for others."¹² Hence the introduction of a certain level of satire. Sant'Ana decided to use copious amounts of sugar in his contemporary performances to counterbalance its previous status as "white gold" during the era of slavery. Further, the artist combined the historical references to slave labor with contemporary instruments such as the electric iron. In so doing, he sought to underscore the way that "in the social imaginary, Blacks continue to be associated with physical and domestic labor."¹³
- 33 In turn, Sant'Ana engages with sugar in a directly corporeal way, substituting his own body for that of the black male slave, making his body perform the labor that one sees and hears in the videoed performances, thereby lessening the distinction between then and now. Rather than remain removed from the sugar, a seemingly innocuous material that, in fact, represents a history of pain and suffering, he subjects himself to "very intense bodily interventions, immersing himself in the energy and memories of the environment" and lets himself be both physically and symbolically buried in the sugar, in the "ruins of fear and silence" (Heráclito 2018: 29).
- 34 In spring 2018, four of the projects included in Sant'Ana's *Casa de purgar* were first shown in the region's oldest museum—the Museum of Art of Bahia. Built in the 19th

century as the mansion for a wealthy slave trader, the structure would have several subsequent owners and functions.¹⁴ In 1982, the Museum of Art of Bahia was transferred from its original location to the current Vitória Palace, a neocolonial-style building, in a “prominent area of the city known for its mansions belonging to the traditional families of Bahian society.”¹⁵ Ironically, Bahia’s other major art museum and other likely possible venue for Sant’Ana’s exhibition was the Museum of Modern Art, a 17th-century compound that includes a former mansion and slave quarters from the sugar-production era (see Adailton 2019). Originally a home built for a slave trader and subsequently a symbol of “traditional” wealth, the Museum of Art of Bahia was an apt location for Sant’Ana’s critical examination of opulence, forced black labor, and continued social inequality.

- 35 To return to Scarry’s example of duality, one might consider the slave-era architecture in which Paulino and Sant’Ana held their respective exhibitions as weapons. After all, Sant’Ana recognized the power embodied in the various regional sugar plantations he used in his performances as “spaces that would ruin the lives of millions of black and native peoples.”¹⁶ Therefore, one could explore the idea that the black artists are now using the historical architecture as a weapon to fight the resonance of slavery. However, neither artist seems intent on simply creating his or her own visual trauma in the place of past physical violence. Instead, Paulino and Sant’Ana strategically use the architecture as a tool to raise awareness. Artists of color electing to employ spaces that were originally part of the larger program of white control over blacks is a bold choice and a provocative approach. Paulino acknowledges the implications of this role reversal when she states, “to occupy a space with this historical past, as a descendant of slaves, gave major significance to the work” (Paulino 2011: 63).
- 36 Despite these examples, not all Brazil’s architecture with historical ties to slavery has been made into spaces to exhibit art. Further, the appearance and condition of the various structures can be quite different, including, for example, the Mata Dentro Plantation *senzala* as compared to the former mansion of the slave trader José de Cerqueira Lima. Nevertheless, the fact that these sites have now been transformed into spaces for cultural enjoyment is indicative of Brazil’s historical reluctance to recognize how Afro-Brazilians might continue to be negatively affected by both the tangible and intangible reminders of slavery.

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- 37 In their artistic explorations, both Paulino and Sant’Ana play with dualities. On the one hand, both artists emphasize blackness through the genre of slave labor, be it in the form of the black domestic wet nurse or the enslaved sugar plantation worker. They also feature whiteness via breast milk and sugar, two substances that supported the racial divide between the slaves and the masters. Rather than perpetuate the conceptual polarity of these two groups, however, both artists highlight a binary that demonstrates how without “Black,” “White” would not exist, even today.
- 38 Through the critical reflections discussed in this article, as well as in other works, Paulino and Sant’Ana are part of the small number of Brazilian artists of color who engage with slavery as an artistic subject. During that historical era, both the black wet nurse’s breast milk and the enslaved plantation laborer’s efforts provided nutritional and economic “sustenance” for white society. Today, Paulino and Sant’Ana draw from

those same sources of “nourishment” to fuel their own intellectual inquiries, creative production, and social critiques.

- 39 The artists employ several techniques to emphasize the resonances of slavery. Both draw on historical sources and incorporate slave-era images in their contemporary production. Even more significant is their utilization of space. In employing sites with historical ties to slavery either in the process of creating their work, as a space to exhibit their work, or a combination of the both, the artists underscore the original function of these architectural remains. In their respective provocative interventions, these artists make strategic visual statements about racial inequality past and present.

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NOTES

1. For example, intellectuals organized the First and Second Afro-Brazilian Congresses in Recife (1934) and Salvador (1937) to, among other things, attempt to change the prevailing negative view of Brazil's African influences. Decades later, the Brazilian government highlighted the country's African heritage for its own political and economic interests in building relationships with newly independent African countries. See Cleveland 2012.
2. See "Lei no 10.639, de 9 de janeiro de 2003" www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/2003/L10.639.htm [last accessed, January 2020]; Medeiros 2004: 116–122.
3. Although it is difficult to determine a definitive list of the architectural remains, see the structures related to sugar production discussed in Azevedo 2009, and the works related to coffee plantations in Pereira da Silva 2006, for example.
4. Sant'Ana "Casa de purgar" www.youtube.com/watch?v=9prbtyTn798 [last accessed, January 2020].
5. "Abertura da exposição 'Casa de Purgar' de Tiago Sant'Ana" br.eventbu.com/salvador/abertura-da-exposicao-casa-de-purgar-de-tiago-sant-ana/10450810 [last accessed, January 2020].
6. Sant'Ana, personal correspondence with the author, March 26, 2019.
7. Sant'Ana, interview by the author, February 11, 2019.
8. "Museu de Arte da Bahia inicia comemorações do centenário" www.cmg.ba.gov.br/2017/07/140098,20/Museu-de-Arte-da-Bahia-inicia-comemoracoes-do-centenario-.html [last accessed, January 2020].
9. Paulino, personal correspondence with the author, January 7, 2019.
10. Paulino, personal correspondence with the author, April 19, 2019.
11. Paulino, personal correspondence with the author, April 19, 2019.
12. Sant'Ana, personal correspondence with the author, March 26, 2019.
13. Sant'Ana, personal correspondence with the author, March 26, 2019.
14. The exhibition subsequently traveled to Rio de Janeiro's Imperial Palace.
15. "Museu de Arte da Bahia" www.conhecendomuseus.com.br/museus/museu-de-arte-da-bahia/ [last accessed, January 2020].
16. Sant'Ana, personal correspondence with the author, March 26, 2019.

ABSTRACTS

Contemporary Afro-Brazilian artists Rosana Paulino and Tiago Sant'Ana use slavery as a source of inspiration or "sustenance" for their creative production. This "sustenance" of slavery holds a dual meaning in these two artists' work in that they each explore a different form of "nourishment" related to that historical era. Paulino focuses on the enslaved wet nurse, whose breast milk went to feed white infants, while Sant'Ana uses sugar as an artistic medium and

references the role of enslaved African labor on the country's northeastern plantations. For Paulino, the enslaved wet nurse is a way to connect herself with other black women who have also been marginalized owing to their race and gender. For Sant'Ana, the use of sugar is a means to approximate himself to the history of forced black labor and continued racial inequality in his home region of Bahia. As such, the artists are more interested in using their work to inspire dialogue about Brazil's contemporary racial issues as they are in exploring the past.

Both artists mine Brazil's visual archive of slavery as part of their artistic process. In incorporating 19th-century prints and photographs of different types of black labor in their 21st-century interpretations, they highlight the ubiquitous presence of slavery-era visuals in contemporary society. However, artists must take a more pointed approach than solely using historical images to effectively critique sustained social disparities. Therefore, in utilizing sites with historical ties to slavery in a provocative manner, Paulino and Sant'Ana strategically use space as a key element to underscore persistent racial inequality.

Les artistes afro-brésiliens contemporains Rosana Paulino et Tiago Sant'Ana font appel à l'esclavage comme source d'inspiration ou de « subsistance » pour leur production créative. La « subsistance » de l'esclavage revêt une signification double dans le travail de ces deux artistes : en effet, ils explorent chacun une forme différente de « nourriture » liée à cette époque historique. Paulino se concentre sur la figure de la nourrice asservie, dont le lait maternel a alimenté les nourrissons blancs, tandis que Sant'Ana utilise le sucre comme médium artistique et fait référence au rôle de la main-d'œuvre africaine esclave dans les plantations du nord-est du pays. Pour Paulino, le choix de la nourrice esclave est un moyen de se connecter avec d'autres femmes noires qui ont également été marginalisées en raison de leur race et de leur sexe. Quant à Sant'Ana, l'utilisation qu'il fait du sucre lui permet de se rapprocher de l'histoire du travail noir forcé et des inégalités raciales persistantes dans sa région natale de Bahia. En tant que tels, les artistes aspirent davantage à ouvrir le dialogue, grâce à leur travail, sur les problèmes raciaux contemporains du Brésil, qu'à explorer le passé.

Les deux artistes ont exploité les archives visuelles de l'esclavage au Brésil dans le cadre de leur processus artistique. En incorporant au sein même de leurs interprétations du *xxi*^e siècle des gravures du *xix*^e ainsi que des photographies de différents types de travail noir, ils ont pu mettre en évidence l'omniprésence d'images de l'esclavage dans la société contemporaine. Cependant, pour critiquer efficacement les disparités sociales persistantes, les artistes ne se cantonnent pas à la seule utilisation d'images historiques : en intégrant, de manière provocatrice, des sites ayant des liens historiques avec l'esclavage, Paulino et Sant'Ana utilisent stratégiquement l'espace comme élément-clé pour souligner la persistance des inégalités raciales.

Los artistas afrobrasileños contemporáneos Rosana Paulino y Tiago Sant'Ana utilizan la esclavitud como fuente de inspiración o “sustento” para su producción creativa. El “sustento” de la esclavitud tiene un doble significado en el trabajo de ambos artistas, ya que cada uno explora una forma diferente de “alimentación” relacionada con ese período histórico. Paulino se enfoca en la nodriza esclava, cuya leche materna alimentó a los bebés blancos, mientras que Sant'Ana usa el azúcar como medio artístico y hace referencia al papel de la mano de obra africana esclavizada en las plantaciones del noreste del país. Para Paulino, la nodriza esclava es una forma de conectarse con otras mujeres negras que también han sido marginadas debido a su raza y género. Para Sant'Ana, el uso del azúcar es un medio para aproximarse a la historia del trabajo negro forzado y la continua desigualdad racial en su región natal de Bahía. Es así como los artistas se interesan más por la posibilidad de usar su trabajo para inspirar el diálogo sobre los problemas raciales contemporáneos de Brasil que por la exploración del pasado.

Ambos artistas recurrieron a los archivos visuales disponibles en Brasil sobre esclavitud como parte de su proceso artístico. Al incorporar grabados y fotografías del *siglo* XIX de diferentes tipos de trabajo negro en sus interpretaciones del *siglo* XXI, destacan la omnipresencia de las

imágenes de la época de la esclavitud en la sociedad contemporánea. Sin embargo, los artistas deben adoptar un enfoque más incisivo que el uso únicamente de imágenes históricas para criticar de manera efectiva las actuales disparidades sociales. Más bien, al utilizar de manera provocativa sitios que tienen vínculos históricos con la esclavitud, Paulino y Sant'Ana utilizan estratégicamente el espacio como un elemento clave para subrayar la persistente desigualdad racial.

As artistas afro-brasileiras contemporâneas Rosana Paulino e Tiago Sant'Ana usam a escravidão como fonte de inspiração ou "sustento" para sua produção criativa. O "sustento" da escravidão tem um significado duplo na obra desses dois artistas, na medida em que cada um deles explora uma forma diferente de "nutrição" relacionada à época histórica. Paulino concentra-se na enfermeira molhada escravizada, cujo leite materno foi para alimentar crianças brancas, enquanto Sant'Ana usa o açúcar como meio artístico e faz referência ao papel do trabalho africano escravizado nas plantações do nordeste do país. Para Paulino, a enfermeira molhada escravizada é uma maneira de se conectar com outras mulheres negras que também foram marginalizadas devido à sua raça e gênero. Para Sant'Ana, o uso do açúcar é um meio de se aproximar da história do trabalho forçado de negros e da desigualdade racial contínua em sua região natal na Bahia. Como tal, os artistas estão mais interessados em usar seu trabalho para inspirar o diálogo sobre as questões raciais contemporâneas do Brasil, enquanto exploram o passado.

Ambos os artistas exploraram o arquivo visual brasileiro da escravidão como parte de seu processo artístico. Ao incorporar impressões e fotografias do século XIX de diferentes tipos de trabalho negro em suas interpretações do século XXI, elas destacam a presença onipresente de visuais da era da escravidão na sociedade contemporânea. No entanto, os artistas devem adotar uma abordagem mais pontual do que usar apenas imagens históricas para criticar efetivamente as disparidades sociais sustentadas. Em vez disso, ao utilizar locais com laços históricos com a escravidão de maneira provocativa, Paulino e Sant'Ana usam estrategicamente o espaço como um elemento-chave para destacar a desigualdade racial persistente.

INDEX

Mots-clés: travail, Rosana Paulino, Tiago Sant'Ana, sucre, nourrice, plantation, architecture

Palavras-chave: trabalho, Rosana Paulino, Tiago Sant'Ana, açúcar, ama de leite, plantação, arquitetura

Palabras claves: trabajo, Rosana Paulino, Tiago Sant'Ana, azúcar, nodriza, plantación, arquitectura

Keywords: labor, Rosana Paulino, Tiago Sant'Ana, sugar, wet nurse, plantation, architecture

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